CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS, ARE THE FEET OF HIM THAT BRINGETH GOOD TIDINGS, THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE."—Isa. lii, 7.

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

LETTER, FROM A GENTLEMAN TO HIS NIECE.

"What you say, dear Niece, relative to the doctrine of Universalism, which I have embraced, merits particular attention. You speak of this doctrine as being 'most fatal to the truths of divine revelation, and the everlasting peace of man; as being an erroneous and a dangerous sentiment, which cannot be depended upon,' &c. But dear Niece, you do not offer me the least *evidence* that such is the fact. You must be aware, that mere assertions prove nothing. You say, 'I was pleased with the sentiments you expressed on the subject of religion, until you declared your choice of the Churches. After hearing you express yourself so satisfactorily on the subject of the holy religion of Jesus, I was surprised beyond measure, my dear Uncle, to hear you declare yourself in favor of the Universalist,' &c. The sentiments, dear Niece, I expressed on the subject of religion, and with which you say you were pleased, allow me to state, were in fact the sentiments and spirit of Universalism. These sentiments, thank God, find a ready and a hearty welcome, in every generous and benevolent bosom. All was well, it seems, until I declared myself in favor of the Universalists. This shows that your opposition to the system of Universalism, is more the result of prejudice to the *name* and ignorance of its principles, than of any thing else. You say of this doctrine, that it 'has been decried as one most fatal, &c. ever since the rays of gospel intelligence have enlightened the before benighted and miserable race of human beings.' Now dear Niece, had you said of this doctrine, 'it has been decried, &c. ever since the apostacy of the Church,' you would have come much nearer the truth; for certain it is that from the days of Christ and his apostles, to the period of the apostacy, it was the prevailing sentiment of the Christian world, as all history plainly declares. But admitting this doctrine has been 'decried,' as you state, does this prove the doctrine *false?* Certainly not. The grand question touching this sentiment is, what do the *scriptures* say concerning it? and not what has been said or thought of it by imperfect, misguided man, in any age of the world. This question I shall duly consider in its proper place. Your statement dear Niece, that this doctrine is 'fatal to the peace of man,' is contradicted by the experience of every sincere believer of it. Instead of destroying, it is every way calculated to increase the peace and happiness of man. To the truth of this remark, I beg leave to add the weight of my own blessed and happy experience. Those who believe in this doctrine, as saith the apostle, 'enter into rest.' They are at rest both with regard to themselves, and to all their friends. Without a belief in this sentiment, we are persuaded there can be no lasting and settled peace; and we appeal to the experience of every believer of the doctrine of endless misery, in proof of the remark. The advocates of this cruel doctrine, are never perfectly at rest and peace, with regard to themselves or friends, nor can they be. Continual agitation, fear and anguish, are the natural fruits of this sentiment, which clearly prove it false; for those who embrace the *truth* enter into rest. Rest and peace, are the natural result of a belief of the truth. The doctrine of universal salvation, contrary to your declaration *does* procure me permanent happiness in the present world; and it remains to be decided by the scriptures, whether as you say, it will not afford me 'aught but *misery* in the world to come.' Your earnest 'entreaties,' I doubt not, are offered in sincerity, and are attributed to an *honest* but *mistaken* zeal, in reference to my future and immortal destiny. Your affectionate regard, and the deep interest you manifest in my welfare, are duly reciprocated. Has not the Almighty, dear Niece, as much love for his creatures as any of them have for each other, and is he not as much interested in their happiness? Will he not then, do as well by me and by all men, as you would if you had the power? Remember John says, 'God is love.' This is his nature. But you are perhaps ready to say, God is also *just*. Granted. But is his justice in any sense opposed to his love and mercy? Certainly not. Do not 'set at jarring odds heaven's attributes, and with one perfection wound another.' The requirements of justice, love and mercy, are the *same*. Were this not the case, then God would be divided against himself, and of course would cease to be God.

You refer me to the Bible—to the *word of God*, which you say, 'cannot be confuted, cannot be disputed with reason.' No, dear Niece, it canot be. Reason is the Bible's handmaid. Reason and the word of God perfectly harmonize. And to these I beg leave now to appeal, in vindication of the religious sentiments which I have embraced. First, to reason alone. Had God any design in the creation of man? Reason answers yes, as a being of infinite wisdom could not act without design. Was the design, a good or bad design, in reference to mankind? Reason says that it was a good design, that it must have embraced their happiness. I ask, is there any power in the whole universe, that can frustrate this good design of God? Reason says no! Then it will be accomplished. Then will all mankind ultimately be made happy.

Now to the word of God and reason united. The Almighty says in addressing Abraham, 'And in thy seed, shall all the nations and families of the earth be blessed.' There is a passage in the 3d chapter of Acts, at the 25th verse, written in allusion to this ancient promise of God to Abraham. 'Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed, shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.' The seed here referred to, is Christ. Says Paul, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.' The *nature* of the blessings here described, is justification. See Rom. v, 18. 'Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon *all* men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, [Christ] the free gift came upon *all* men unto justification of life.' Thus, dear Niece, you see that the 'word of God,' to which you refer me, embraces the justification or happiness of all men. Says the Psalmist, 22, 27. 'All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.' Again, 86, 9. 'All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name.' Again, 72d Psalm. 'All nations shall serve him,' [Christ.] Will not all who turn unto the Lord, who worship him, and serve Christ, be happy? Jehovah says by the prophet Isaiah, 45th chapter, 'I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, in the Lord have I *righteousness* and strength.' All must consequently be happy. In the 25th chapter, it is said, 'The Lord God will wipe away tears from off *all* faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off *all* the earth, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' This agrees with a passage in Rev. which reads thus, 'And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.' Will not *all* then be happy? Again, the Almighty says by the prophet Isaiah, 'I will not contend forever, neither be always wroth: for the spirit would fail before me, and the souls which I have made.' Now, dear Niece, can you give as good a reason why the Almighty *will* contend, or punish forever, as he has given why he *will not?* We read, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.' Again, 'God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us.' We read, that he 'delivered up Christ for us *all*.' Now does not the fact, that the Almighty delivered up his Son to taste death for every man, furnish as good evidence that he loves every man as well as he does any man? And if he loves every man as well, does it not follow, that he will just as certainly save *every* man, as that he will save *any* man? Can you avoid this conclusion? But perhaps you are ready to say, Though God so loved the world, that he gave his Son to die for it, yet unless mankind accept of Christ, and are converted, he will not save them. Well, how are they to be converted, and be brought to love God? The answer is, by being made acquainted with his love, and having it shed abroad in their hearts. Thus John says, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' Who confers this favor, and thus enlightens the minds of men? It is God alone; and he does it because he loves them. Let us apply this argument in its full force and extent. People are converted to God, and induced to love him, by being made sensible of the love of God to them—and this love is proved by the fact, that he gave his Son for them. It is all the effect of divine love to man. Well, what will induce all men to love God, and of course effect the salvation of all? Certainly to convince them all of the same facts—to satisfy them that God loved the whole family of man, to such an extent, as to give his only and well beloved Son, to die for their offences, and to rise again for their justification. Make all mankind feel and realize this truth, and it will effect the conversion, and consequently the happiness of all. Well cannot God thus convince all men of the great love wherewith he loved them, and continues to love them? His infinite attributes forbid us to doubt of his *ability? And will he not do it?* Pause—recollect that if you

decide that God will not complete the work of salvation with respect to all for whom the Savior died, he has not so much love for the human family as he professes to have, or has not the *ability* to do all his pleasure. Do not thus mistake the nature and character of God. Remember that he so loved the world, that he gave his Son to die for it, when the world did not love him. Love thus strong, being united with infinite wisdom and omnipotent power, will most assuredly accomplish the endless salvation and happiness of every son and daughter of our race. How unreasonable the thought, that the divine Creator, will raise a part of the family to heaven, and sink the rest to hell! Is this the character of a *good* being? Is this the religion of Christ? Is this the religion that makes men happy? Is this the religion that prepares people for heaven? Impossible!

Says John, 17, 2, 'As thou hast given him, [Christ,] authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' How many has the Father given him? We read, the Father hath given *all things* into his hands. Hence, all are to share in the blessings of eternal life. Of Christ, it is said, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Now if the heathen, and the uttermost parts of the earth, which certainly include all mankind, are given to Christ for an inheritance and for a possession, will not all be saved, will not all be made happy? Will any portion of the lawful inheritance of Christ, for which he suffered and died, be abandoned to endless torture? Never! We read, that God 'in the dispensation of the fulness of times, will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' Says John the Revelator, 'And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying; blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.' When this period arrives, will not all be happy?

Says Paul, 'We exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men;***For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.' Here you will observe that the apostle declares, that it is both good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, that as the *first* of all, supplications, &c. should be made for all men. How we ask, would the apostle have us pray? Would he have us pray without faith? Or in other words, would he have us pray for the salvation of all men, without believing that all will be saved? And would he have us pray for the salvation of all men, if the salvation of all be not a truth? Would he approve of the common practice of certain professed ministers of the gospel, who stand up before their respective congregations, and fervently pray, that all mankind may be saved, when they believe that a part will most certainly be *damned?* Let the apostle answer this question himself. He says, 'I will therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;' 'for whatever *is* not of *faith, is sin.*' Again, will the Almighty refuse to hear and grant those prayers, which he has directed to be offered in faith, without doubting, and which are declared to be good and acceptable in his sight? Or to vary the question, will he refuse to save all men, when he has commanded us to pray for the salvation of all—when it is his will and pleasure to save all? Let the apostle answer, 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing, according to his will, he heareth us, and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions, that we desired of him.' But you will perhaps say, Does not the Almighty will the salvation, the immortal happiness of mankind, upon the conditions of faith and obedience on their part? I answer, no. To admit such conditions, would be the same as to say, that God has no will in this case, independent of man. This conclusion cannot be avoided, if we admit that God only wills the salvation of man, on the fulfilment of certain conditions—for until man complies with these conditions, it cannot be said that God wills his salvation. This doctrine therefore, not only reduces the Deity to a level with, but even degrades him to a dependence upon finite man. It is plain that the apostle knew of no such will as this, for he says nothing about it. His views of the will of God, appear to be perfectly consistent with the divine Creator, being unincumbered with those degrading conditions, which strike at the very root of the divine supremacy, and renders the Almighty an impotent being. I might, dear Niece, introduce a great many passages more, that go *directly* to substantiate the glorious doctrine of the "restitution of *all* things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of *all* his holy prophets, since the world began," but I must forbear for the present, for the want of room. Dear Niece, if the divine testimony which I have cited in this epistle, be all a 'joke,' then what I said in my last in favor of Universalism, 'was only as a joke;' but if it be a *reality*, then am I a Universalist.

But you are perhaps ready to inquire, what I will do with the *threatnings* contained in the divine word? I answer, all the punishment threatened in the holy scriptures is *disciplinary*—is designed for the good of the punished. It is by no means to militate against the fulfillment of the divine promises in a single instance; no, God forbid; but is rather to be inflicted in subserviency to the good that is to follow. This I might prove to you, from many passages of scripture, if my limits would permit. SETOLEZ.

FROM THE UNIVERSALIST EXPOSITOR.

EXPLANATION OF JOHN VIII, 21.

"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way; and ye shall seek me; and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." John viii, 21.

This is the passage which has been commonly repeated under the following noted but spurious form: "*If* ye die in your sins, whither I go ye cannot come." Let us not be thought hypercritical in remarking that this variation from the genuine reading of the text, though trifling indeed as to the words, is very important as to the sense. One thing is manifest: it would make the inability of the Jews to go whither Christ went, depend on the condition of their dying in their sins; so that *if* they did *not* die in their sins, they *could* come whither he was going. Now, this idea our Savior neither expressed or intended. He did not express it, as the reader may see by casting his eye again on the text itself, where he will find four assertions, each separate from the others; 1. I go my way; 2. ye shall seek me; 3. and shall die in your sins; 4. whither I go ye cannot come. All these were positive, unconditional facts, and so far as regarded their truth, independent of each other. That the Jews should not be able to come whither he was going, was absolute, and depended no more on the condition of their dying in their sins, than their dying in their sins depended on the condition of their seeking him. So much may be observed on the language of the text. And with regard to our Savior's meaning, it is certain that he did not intend to intimate the conditionality commonly attributed to his words; because he afterwards assured his own disciples, who did not die in their sins, that they could not come whither he was going, in the same sense in which the Jews would be unable: "Little children," said he, "yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you."* Accordingly there was to be, in this one respect, the same event, whether they died in their sins or not: in both cases indiscriminately, they could not come whither he was going.

Our Savior's meaning in both of these passages, will be clear enough, when we shall have brought into view the respective circumstances that occasioned the remarks. When he addressed the Jews, they were seeking to take him in order to put him to death;† and the 7th and 8th chapters of St. John (the context of the passage under examination,) are occupied with an account of the events and conversation which then occurred. Hunted from place to place, Christ turned to his deadly pursuers, and in the language of persecuted innocence, reminded them that he was fast hastening to that rest where the wicked cease from troubling: "I go my way." It was but six months before his crucifixion. He told them that their time was short, for he was soon to go beyond the reach of their murderous attempts, where they could not come to molest him. So indeed the Jews understood him; for they "said among themselves, whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles?"‡ "Will he kill himself? because he saith, whither I go ye cannot come."‖ When, again, Christ addressed his disciples, it was the night on which he was betrayed. To fix their attention on the few instructions he was about to give them, and to prepare them to receive these commands as his dying words, he told them that he should be with them but a little while; and that in a short time they would seek in vain to approach him, as then, in order to obtain his personal advice and direction. Having thus impressed their minds, he added, in the very next words, "A new commandment I give unto you," &c.§ H. B. 2d.

* John xiii. 33. † John vii, 25, 30, 32, 45, 46—viii, 6, 37, 40, 59. ‡ John vii, 35, compared with 33, 34. ‖ viii, 22, compared with 21. § John xiii, 34, compared with 33.

FROM THE GOSPEL ANCHOR.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO THE SENIOR EDITOR.

Br. Le Fevre—With pleasure I devote a few leisure moments, for the purpose of informing you of the prosperity of our common cause in this region of country, believing that such information will be gratefully received, and that you must feel a deep interest in the general dissemination of those sentiments in the immediate vicinity of your former labors, and for the open avowal of which, you submitted to a separation from the church to which you belonged.

As the advocates of the doctrine of God's impartial grace are rapidly increasing in the United States, it will be cheering to the hearts of our brethren, to learn that an extensive field is opened in his Majesty's dominions, and that the cause of truth is in a prosperous condition in this part of our Master's heritage. About the time in which you left the province, I made a tour through this region. I then found some warm and devoted friends, who were anxious and determined to obtain the labors of some minister in our connexion: but the country was new, and the believers in the Abrahamic faith were scattered over a large extent of territory, and were consequently unacquainted with each other. There was no organization, no union of effort; it was with difficulty our periodicals could be obtained, or Universalist publications procured; and even some well-established and intelligent brethren were almost entirely ignorant of the existence of such books and papers. These, (and

there were many such,) had found their doctrine in the rich treasures of divine revelation. But the exertions of our brethren have been truly praiseworthy. The Trumpet, the Watchman and the Anchor, are now extensively circulated, and are read with interest and attention, while our most approved works are to be found in almost every neighborhood. These varied publications have exerted a most salutary influence—for many that were opposed to the doctrine, are now convinced of its truth, while others who despaired of salvation, now rejoice in the hope of immortal glory.

Ample provision has been made for the support of the gospel for two years. Two respectable Societies have been formed—one at Shipton, and the other at Stunstead. Here the foundation for two large and permanent Societies has been laid, and I have sufficient ground to make the assurance that in a few weeks, two or three more will be organized—one in Ascot, one in Compton, and probably one in Hatley. It is now three months since I commenced my labors in this vicinity. Our meetings have been uniformly well attended, and much interest is manifested. The field of my labors is extensive and requiring my constant attention, extending from Stunstead to Shipton, sixty miles. I frequently receive invitations to preach in the Northern parts of Vermont, and have been also requested to visit and preach in Montreal, where, if I am correctly informed, many of our friends reside. The harvest is great, the fields are white for the sickle, but the laborers are scarce. There is not a fellow-laborer within sixty miles, and constant calls are made from every quarter.

Four days' meetings have been holden in Stunstead, Hatley and Shipton; assistance has been sought from the land of revivals, the proselyting system put into operation, but Calvinism has but little influence north of 45 degrees latitude. Adieu for the present.

Yours in the gospel, J. WARD.

Lenoxville, L. C. Dec. 29, 1831.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER.

DR. SCOTT'S OPINION OF A FREE SALVATION.

Universalists have often been branded, by their opposers, with the odium, that the doctrine of the salvation of all men presents an inducement to continue in sin. Some have been so clamorous, as even to declare, if they believed the salvation of ALL were sure, they would indulge in every species of iniquity, that unhallowed desire and appetite should dictate—they would enrich by fraud and theft, and pleasure in riot and excess. However few there may be who feel to indulge in such superstitious spite as this, and others who innocently think Universalism tends to immorality; the following extract from Dr. Scott will show in what light that great divine viewed this subject.

"Let us not overlook the end, for which the Son of God was manifested in our nature. Men may pervert and abuse, or they may object to the sacred truth of God's word; but surely none can be encouraged IN sin, by a free and gracious salvation FROM sin."

This is the sentiment of every REAL Universalist. Hence, if the Doctor's reasoning be good, let it be said no more the doctrine tends to wickedness.

EXPOSITION.

"*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*"—Mark xvi, 15. To *preach* signifies to proclaim, to declare, to make known—not to offer a thing contingently. The gospel signifies good news. What this good news is may be learned from Luke ii, 10, to be "great joy which shall be to all people." To preach the gospel, is to proclaim *the fact*, that, as the result of Christ's mediation, great joy shall ultimately be the portion of all people. What is subsequently stated—that "he that believeth—shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," (or condemned) is a consequence of belief or disbelief, in the present tense; but not a consequence which conflicts with the previously stated fact. There is a present salvation, and there is a condemnation that rests upon the unbeliever. "He that doubteth," (i. e. doth not believe,) "is damned." All have been at some time in this state of unbelief and condemnation, but are delivered from it as fast as they believe.—*Univ. Reg.*

NEW SOCIETIES.

Since January 1831, we have heard of the organization of Universalist Societies as follows: in Maine, 10; New-Hampshire, 6; Vermont, 11; Massachusetts, 6; Connecticut, 2; New-York, 27; Pennsylvania, 4, Ohio, 3, and Maryland, 1. Total 70. The whole number formed the year before was 48—making an excess in 1831 of 22 over the year 1830. There are now in Maine 89 Societies; in New-Hampshire, 55; in Vermont, 62; in Massachusetts, 91; in Connecticut, 27; in New-York, about 187. The exact number in the other states has not been well ascertained.—*Ib.*

FROM THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH.

A PLAIN STATEMENT.

Reader! art thou an Universalist? If thou art not, thou must be a Partialist. If thou art a Partialist, thy faith cannot be founded in the wisdom of God. "The wisdom that is from above, is full of mercy and good fruits, *without partiality*. James iii, 17. Surely, if thy faith be *full of mercy*, it can contain no cruelty: if it be *full* of *good fruits*, it cannot embrace the doctrine of endless evil: if it be *without partiality*, thou art not a Partialist: and if thou art not a Partialist, and art a christian, thou surely must be an Universalist.

Christian reader! choose thou this day: Wilt thou believe and contend for a partial system, based in the wisdom from beneath? Or wilt thou believe and be governed by the teachings of that impartial system of grace, founded in the wisdom from above; that is without partiality? Remember, thou art either a Universalist or a Partialist. T.

EQUAL MEASURE.

Jesus says—"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Now as no man can measure an endless punishment to another, it is reasonable to suppose that endless punishment will be measured to him?

It should be distinctly remembered, that man is a finate being. He cannot comprehend an infinite law—and surely no one can be justly amenable to a law above his comprehension. As all our powers and faculties, whether of body or mind, are limited; it follows that all our actions are finite, or limited, in their nature—and, consequently, must be finite, or limited, in their effects.

In view of these facts, the doctrine of endless punishment is evidently an *unequal* measure—for it proposes annexing infinite consequences to finite deeds.

To establish the doctrine of endless suffering, it would be necessary to make it appear, that man is an infinite being—consequently equal with God!—for God is no more than infinite. Until this *impossibility* can be accomplished, it is the height of absurdity to contend, that endless punishment would be an equal measure. T.

FROM THE SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

KNOWLEDGE

Of the original circumstances important in reading the New Testament.

The New Testament is a book composed of language, human language, and of course we must treat it as all language is treated that is to be understood; i. e. we must consider the circumstances under which this language was used, the characters of the persons who used it, and the feelings of those to whom it was originally addressed. I will explain what I mean in a few words. If in reading a narrative written two or three hundred years ago, of events that took place at the time, we should meet with repeated and numerous allusions to contemporaneous events, to the feelings and opinions, to the state of society and civil government, to the manners, customs and institutions of the period, it is evident that to understand the narrative thoroughly, we should have to go back, and acquaint ourselves with the state of things at the time it was written. Probably before the narrative comes into our hands we are familiar with the history of the age in which it was written. Then we shall readily understand it. But we are indebted for our understanding of it not to the book alone, but also to our previous knowledge. Take another and perhaps a more striking instance. A book is published at the present day, recording very recent events, describing present manners and opinions; we read it and take its meaning with perfect ease. But then we should not understand it so easily, if in the perusal of it we were not continually and unconsciously referring to our knowledge of the existing state of things. We apprehend the meaning of the book at once, because we are familiar with present opinions and known facts implied or alluded to in the work. This very same book, in the course of a hundred years or more, when present modes of thinking and speaking shall have changed, when a new form shall have been given to society, will become as difficult to be understood as an ancient work is to us now. We see that to read a book understandingly it is not enough to have the book alone; we must be more or less familiar with the state of things under which it was written, or else our knowledge of its contents will be very imperfect.

Now the New Testament is a book composed many hundred years ago in a particular dialect. It is not a general statement of abstract principles. It is a record of facts, and it is full throughout of allusions and references to the events of the times in which it was written, to the feelings and opinions then fashionable and prevalent. It is distinguished by the peculiar ways of speaking and forms of expression then used, and, except in the character and teaching of Jesus Christ which are in advance of every age, it bears on every page the impress of the particular period in which it purports to have appeared. Without some knowledge of the feelings, opinions, and general condition of the people among whom Jesus appeared, the New Testament may almost be said to be a sealed book. We must strive to forget our own customs and habits of thinking and speaking, and to go back and enter into the feelings of the Jewish multitude. We must familiarize ourselves with Jewish notions and prejudices. We must put off our European costume and assume the oriental garb, and domesticate ourselves in Judea, and endeavor to *live* as it were, at that most eventful period of the world, when the arm that upholds all things was made bare, when the stupendous laws of nature were stopped and commanded to stand back, that the glorious dispensation of truth might enter in. In a word, if we would understand the christian records, we must become acquainted as intimately as we can with the circumstances under which they were written and under which the events they relate took place.

To this method of studying the New Testament it may be objected that it shuts the book to the ignorant and unlearned, who have neither the time nor the ability requisite to collect this various knowledge.

I reply in the first place, that if it were the

design of Providence that we should understand the New Testament, wherein is the revealed will of God, equally well whether we are wise or whether we are ignorant, this book would not have been given to us, as it certainly is, in an unknown tongue. For the most imperfect translation of the Scriptures an amount of learning is required, which the great body of men never obtain.

But secondly, admitting that the objection has some force, I insist that vastly greater injury has been done by the views of the scriptures and the manner of reading them which have most generally prevailed, than would follow the universal adoption of the views now proposed. What has been and is still to a very great extent the impression concerning the Bible? Why, it is regarded as if it were in its whole structure altogether different from all other books. Every text has been read as if it contained a separate and independent proposition. And it has been felt to be profanation to apply to scripture language the rules, which language from its very nature requires, in order to a just explication of its meaning. Of course no regard has been had to passages essentially obscure. The plain tenor of the Bible has been neglected and violated. Ignorance has dogmatized, and the fanciful have wrapt the Scriptures in mysticism, and the Christian world has been filled with wranglings, and ridicule and disgrace have been brought upon the holiest of subjects and the best of books.

Let that way of regarding the Scriptures which I have described be generally adopted; let it be felt that to understand the New Testament we must read and study it as we study all other ancient writings, giving constant heed to the circumstances of antiquity and availing ourselves of all the information we can gather concerning ancient opinions and usages and institutions;—the consequence would be, that a great many who consider themselves very mighty in the Scriptures would have to confess themselves mere babies. The ignorant would cease to build up strange dogmas upon texts which are obscure by reason of their relation to some circumstance or opinion which anciently existed, and which if known to us would make all plain. More reverence would be felt for the general tenor of the Bible. What is plain would be plain, unobscured by strange and mysterious doctrines. The unlearned would rest first and chiefly upon the main facts and simple truths of the Bible. Thanks be to God, these facts and truths are plain and he who runs may read; but they would be still more plain if they were not overshadowed and darkened by the strange interpretations given to the obscurer passages.

So far then from the Scriptures being closed to the unlearned if they were treated like other books—as requiring labor and learning to elucidate them, they would become more clear; for the cloud which ignorance has conjured up out of the obscure texts would be dispelled, and the plain meaning of the Bible wherever it is plain would appear. W. H. Furness.

STEPHEN GIRARD'S WILL.

The following is the restrictive clause in Mr. Girard's Will, which has so much engrossed the public mind for a short time past.

"Secondly, I enjoin and require that no ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister of any sect whatsoever, shall ever hold or exercise any station or duty whatever in the said College; nor shall any such person ever be admitted for any purpose, or as a visitor, within the premises appropriated to the purposes of said college.—In making this restriction I do not mean to cast any reflection upon any sect or person whatever; but, as there is such a multitude of sects, and such a diversity of opinion among them, I desire to keep the tender minds of the orphans, who are to derive advantage from this bequest, free from the excitement which clashing doctrines and sectarian controversy are so apt to produce; my desire is, that all the instructors and teachers in the college, shall take pains to instil into the minds of the scholars, the purest principles of morality, so that, on their entrance into active life, they may, from inclination and habit, evince benevolence towards their fellow creatures, and a love of truth, sobriety, and industry, adopting at the same time such religious tenets, as their matured reason may enable them to prefer."

FROM THE NEW-YORK EVANGELIST.

Mr. Editor—In looking over the New-York Spectator of the 10th inst. I observed a copy of the late Mr. Girard's Will. Curiosity led me to look it through, in order to see how a man of such immense wealth had thought proper to dispose of his possessions after his death. Among other things I observed that *two millions* of dollars are appropriated to the building of *a College for Orphans*. After numerous and minute directions with respect to the construction of the buildings necessary for such a purpose, the testator enjoins it, as an unalterable condition, upon the future guardians of this Seminary, that Secondly, I enjoin and require that no *ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister of any sect whatsoever, shall ever hold or exercise any station or duty whatever in the said college: nor shall any such person ever be admitted for any purpose, or as visitor, within the premises appropriated to the purposes of said college.*

I stopped involuntarily, at the reading of this paragraph and began to muse on the state of the man's mind who penned it. I found it difficult in the end, to settle the question which I should most wonder at, his folly, or his malignity against the christian religion. His folly is unaccountable.—No *minister* of any sect is to be admitted even within the walls of the college precincts, in order to look at the very buildings! Thus, the testator goes on to say, he means to keep away all diversity of opinion from his *protegees*. Indeed? And are there no *sects* among *laymen?* No bigots among those who are not ministers of the gospel? I have always thought that ignorance makes bigotry; and that in proportion as men are enlightened, they become more truly liberal. And who then are the most enlightened in matters of religion, taking them as a body; men who have studied the subject most, or men who have not? So far as I have any knowledge, there is more true liberality of religious feeling among enlightened clergymen, than among any other class of men.

The question is not then, whether the new college shall have *sectarians* for its teachers; for there are no men in the community who are not so, in the sense of Mons. Girard. The question is simply, whether they shall have less enlightened teachers, on the subject of religion, rather than more enlightened ones.

But the orphans are to be taught "pure morality," even the "purest principles" of it. Their religion, the testator demands, shall commence after they leave his college, when they have learned to be "benevolent, and veracious, and sober, and industrious," without it; and when their "matured reason" will enable them to choose well! So then, all the youth of his college are necessarily to be without God and without hope in the world, until they are some 16 or 18 years of age? In the mean time, how many are to *die*, under this age? And who is to be responsible for keeping from them the light of salvation, during all this period? For ten thousand worlds I would not take on me the awful responsibility of the future guardians of this institution. A requisition of such a nature is an insult to a community professing to be christian.

But where are the teachers of "pure morality" to come from? What is the system to be taught—christian morality, or that of the Shasters? And who are to be judges of what is *pure?* I say again, the folly of Mons. Girard's arrangement, is as prominent as its wickedness.

Young men, then, are to be educated without any God, and without any gospel. Nay, the ministers of the gospel are not even to set their foot within the precincts of the college, so as to look at it. When I was a child, I used to hear it sometimes said by the countrymen around me: "A cat may look on a king." But Mons. Girard does not allow the ministers of the gospel even the privileges of this animal. Voltaire could not have showed his malignity to the gospel, more plainly than Mons. G. has done. And in a land of liberty, such as this, are one class of the community to be denied, not only the common rights of citizens, but even the privilege which the birds of the air and the beasts of the field have?

It is in vain to attempt any apology or any defence of such an arrangement as this. The pretended salvo in the Will, does but make it worse. The Will speaks for itself. It is an insult to *christianity*, and an insult to the *christian* part of the community; and it was evidently intended to be such. Of Mons. Girard's private character and sentiments I know nothing. But enough lies on the face of his Will, to show the whole. Either he has been duped into such a proviso as he has made, or else he had a deep seated malignity in his own breast, against the christian religion. I could believe "that the hand of Joab" is in all this affair; and that the author of the famous letter on the Sabbath, and of the Review of Sabbath mails for Mr. Walsh's Quarterly, who is said to have testified the regard which he has for religion by not having been in a church for 30 years, is the real adviser in this case. It looks very much like him. But be this as it may, the provision is an insult to every christian man and woman in the community; and above all, to every such person in the city of Philadelphia. How is it possible, that any mayor or alderman of that city, being a christian, should ever take any part of the supervision of a college, which does open dishonor to his God and Savior, and which on the very face of it is designed to exclude both? I appeal to every such man in that city, and urge this question upon him.

For all the universe, I would not have amassed such an estate, and disposed of it so that the God of heaven should be dishonored by it after my death. Others may view this matter in a different light; I cannot. The city of Philadelphia may be induced by the splendor of the donation to eulogize the giver, and accept the gift; but I do hope, for the honor of christianity, that no one who bears the name of a follower of Jesus, will ever accept of any or all the treasures of the earth, on the express condition of dishonoring the Savior, and doing despite to the ministers of his religion.

I am not alone, Mr. Editor, in these sentiments. Ten thousand thousand hearts respond them. I would rather have the immortality of the man who set fire to the temple of Diana at Ephesus, than that of him, who in a christian land strives by the greatness of his wealth, to cast a lasting infamy upon the gospel, and the Savior of the world. All will not do. Infamy, instead of praise, will sooner or later follow himself. The time is coming, when not a man will be found, in the city of Philadelphia, to take an infidel trust; and when the Orphan College will escheat to the public, or go to remote heirs, for want of guardians and scholars. The time is coming, when parents will not be found to send children to such a school; nor mayor or alderman, to place them there. God speed the blessed day, when *his knowledge* shall cover the earth, as the waters do the sea! A Citizen.

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

EDITED BY T. J. SAWYER AND P. PRICE.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 1832.

SIGNS.

An extract from the will of the late Stephen Girard, comprising the *restriction*, in reference to the Clergy, on his very liberal Donation for the establishment of an Orphan College, will be found on the preceding page. And we think we cannot better subserve the cause of liberal and rational Christianity, than by giving some specimens of the "*bitter invective*," which that, to some, most offensive article, has called forth. A sample will be found immediately following the extract, copied from the New-York Evangelist.

We have occasionally, in common with others, adverted to the evidence, (to our own minds,) of a growing disposition on the part of dominant sects in our Country, to "lord it over God's heritage," and we have as frequently been accused of giving "false alarms"—of illiberal and unfounded insinuations—preferring unjust charges, &c.

It is an old and somewhat hackneyed Proverb, we know, that "straws show which way the wind blows," but it is not the less true for being old, and we think it morally impossible for any rational, reflecting mind to read the articles alluded to, side by side, without admitting the propriety of the application of the proverb in this instance, and discovering in almost every line of the article from the Evangelist, the ravings and ebullitions of *disappointed ambition*. We entreat our readers to carefully peruse both articles, and there is nothing like examining both sides of a subject, to arrive at just conclusions. Let them read the *restriction*, and the reasons assigned for it by the testator, and then the remarks elicited by it, and we are not at all concerned for the result. Comment is hardly necessary. The spirit exhibited by "a Citizen" speaks for itself, and we say in sincerity, Heaven preserve us from the POWER of men who can hold such language, under such circumstances. And has it come to this, that the memory of a man who has given one of the greatest exhibitions of Beneficence, hardly to be found on record, must be hunted down, vilified, traduced, and consigned to infamy, in relation too, to this very Beneficence, merely because, in disposing of *his own*, he chose to attach restrictions to the gift, without calling in the aid of these "ghostly advisers"—these *would-be conscience keepers* to others! We know this is strong language. The occasion demands it. There is a point beyond which *forbearance* ceases to be a virtue. We know not when we have met language more despicable, or more insulting to the community. "*All will not do.* INFAMY WILL SOONER OR LATER FOLLOW HIMSELF!!" And why, friendly reader, is INFAMY sooner or later to follow this great and good man? Solely because he has made one of the most splendid and useful Donations scarcely ever known, and has seen fit to secure it from all rule and dictation of the priesthood. Was their participation in it necessary to its beneficial results? Not at all. Had they any natural or legal rights to its direction? By no means. But their exclusion is "dishonoring the God of Heaven—casting a lasting infamy on the Gospel and Jesus Christ!" Was ever papal denunciation more preposterous? In this writer's own language, though with a little variation in the application, we would say, "All will not do. Infamy will sooner or later follow" every advocate of such abominable sentiments. They may well accord with the doctrines and precepts of the renowned Dr. Ely, and be admirably adapted to that period which he so earnestly desires, and for which he is so eagerly striving, when "Presbyterians alone, can *bring half a million of voters into the field*," and indeed the whole population of freemen come on to the "stage of action, with minds formed under the influence of Sabbath Schools;" but as we have before observed, God in mercy preserve us from such rulers. And we have a confidence that he will. Let men *read, reflect*, and *judge* for themselves, and all will be well. A few more exhibitions like that of the meek, the lowly, the *christian* writer, of whom we are speaking, and the most incredulous may be satisfied—*satisfied*, that it is time for him to be up and doing, if he has any interest in preserving his country from the worst of all evils, *Religious Despotism*.

It is the writer's evident intention to cloak himself under the simple name and character of "a Citizen"—a layman; "but all will not do." "The hand of Joab is in it." And we are led to believe it came from the pen of a no less personage than a popular "Professor" of the day. If we are right in our conjectures, and can judge at all of the spirit of "a Citizen," by his language, although he has long made Christianity his study, we should say he still needed to "be taught the first principles," of the Gospel of Christ.

P.

"WONDERFUL CONVERSION."

In our ninth number, it may be recollected we gave a brief sketch of a conversion, an account of which had just been published in the Advocate and Journal. The individual, a narration of whose change, was there given, was said to have been a Universalist, and there seemed no little joy on the part of the writer at this remarkable triumph of Methodism, when one of an opposite faith was brought to see and acknowledge the truth, and beauty, and glory of endless misery. Several circumstances combined to make us doubt the whole story, especially the apparent caution not to give any clue by which the facts in the case might be ascertained. The subject of conversion was "a farmer, and lived in the town of ——— Long Island." In our remarks on the narrative alluded to, we asked Dr. Bangs, and through him, his correspondent, to furnish the *name* and *residence* of this converted Universalist, more than hinting to him that blanks were but poor directories, and that it became *honest* men to give names of person and place when they related stories which were liable to be called in question. Several weeks passed away, and our opinion was becoming confirmed, that neither the Doctor nor his correspondent dared to give the information we asked, when we received a letter on the subject from a valued friend on Long Island, which again called up our attention. We immediately directed the following note to Dr. Bangs and his associate editor.

"NEW-YORK, JAN. 20, 1832.

"To the editors of the "Advocate and Journal."

"GENTLEMEN—In the 17th number of the current Volume of the Advocate and Journal, on the 1st page and 5th column, we have observed an article, entitled "The Change," which purports to be an account of the conversion of a Universalist. As we conceive the article calculated (even if the pretended conversion be a fact) to give an impression relative to Universalism and Universalists entirely false, and as we feel ourselves, and the cause in whose advancement we are engaged, deeply interested and injured by such popular but unauthenticated stories, we take the liberty of asking you to furnish us with the NAME and RESIDENCE of the individual, said to have been "a firm believer and conspicuous advocate" of Universalism, who has recently renounced this doctrine. The narrative, as you will see by turning to your file, says only that he is a farmer, and lives in the town of ———, Long Island, from which we are wholly unable to learn even the person's residence, much less his name.

"We take this means to inform ourselves, the more readily, because we are aware that it is in your power easily to ascertain, if not already apprized, who and where the individual in question may be, since it is a rule in the management of the Advocate and Journal, that "all biographies, accounts of revivals and other matters involving *facts*, must be accompanied with the proper names of the writers." By an early compliance with our request, which we cannot but think *reasonable*, and which we believe the CHRISTIAN RULE of doing to others as we would have them do to us, renders an imperious duty, you will confer a favor on us and Universalists generally. Reminding you that *truth* needs no concealment, and that *pure religion* is poorly sustained by fiction or discolored facts,

"With all due respect, we subscribe ourselves,

"Yours, &c.

"P. PRICE & T. J. SAWYER."

Two days after, we received the following answer.

"14 Crosby-st. Jan. 21, 1832.

"GENTLEMEN—We have just received your note containing inquiries respecting the real name of a Mr. —— of ——— L. I.

"At present we have only the name of the preacher who sent us the account. We presume there is nothing incorrect in the statement. Christ himself said "There was a certain rich man," &c. but did not give us his real name, and yet neither truth nor real religion have suffered for want of the disclosure.

"Yours, &c,

"EDITORS C. A. & J. &c.

"Messrs. Price & Sawyer."

We give these notes because they belong to the public, and we are willing the public should know the ungentlemanly and unchristianlike conduct of the editors of the Methodist Journal. A correspondent had furnished them with an account of a conversion—of whom? of a Universalist! accompanied by many slanderous remarks and insinuations, with respect both to the faith and character of Universalists as a denomination. They hesitate not to lay the account before their 25,000 patrons, while they must have been conscious, (for we cannot acquit them on the ground of *ignorance*,) that they were aiding and disseminating what was either false in fact

or calculated to give a false impression. But the converted man had been a Universalist, and conversions of such were too rare to suffer a solitary one to pass unimproved. The story must be told and spread as a matter of exultation and rejoicing through the whole Methodist Episcopal Church. We first, through the medium of the Christian Messenger, ask Dr. Bangs to furnish the name and residence of this converted Universalist. We afterwards send him and his assistant a respectful note, begging of him the same information. And what is the answer? What could it be, but either a frank and honest avowal of the name, &c. of the individual in question, or an assurance that it should be furnished when convenience would permit? Surely, if the account was correct, it could be easily substantiated, and investigation would be only the more convincing. What, then, could be the cause of studied concealment? Did the editors know the story to be false, or did they but shrewdly suspect it would poorly sustain investigation?

But our editors say, "We presume there is nothing incorrect in the statement." *We* presume that this was the very point in question, and on which we did not ask what the editors *presumption* might be. We asked only the *name* and *residence* of this converted Universalist. With these, the fact relative to the correctness or incorrectness of the statement could easily be ascertained. But if their bare presumption in the case was not perfectly satisfactory, it was to be backed by a most conclusive circumstance. "Christ himself said, 'There was a certain rich man,' &c. but did not give his real name." Most wonderful!

There is a striking similarity in the cases, we acknowledge, and that too in more respects than one; for as the language of our Savior, to which reference is made, is confessedly a *parable*, and not a matter of fact, so we doubt not the narrative under consideration is a *parable* likewise; and no one surely will dispute that the fate of "a certain rich man" alluded to, very aptly and beautifully represents the miserable condition of a Universalist, who should have exchanged his own glorious and happy faith for the cheerless *uncertainties* of Methodism. For ourselves we could not wish, and hardly fear, a worse hell than to undergo such a "change." But can the editors of the Advocate and Journal really appeal to the language of Christ as a precedent? Have they not discrimination enough to see, or honesty enough to confess, that there is no similarity in the cases, except in the points above mentioned? The account published in the Advocate and Journal, was published as a *fact*, and the editors themselves say, "we presume there is nothing incorrect in the statement." Will they risk their reputation in affirming that the parable of the rich man was a real matter of fact? and will they gratify their numerous readers in attempting to prove what they have, in the above note, so plainly intimated?

We are truly sorry that the editors of the Advocate and Journal should so far have forgotten their dignity and their duty as to return us such a reply. If they owed *us* nothing, they certainly should have reflected that they owed something to *themselves*. They perhaps feel that they can act with impunity. Our voice cannot be heard by their readers. They may therefore misrepresent and belie us as they will. The veriest fiction passes as truth among those who are too ignorant to judge, and too much under the control of others to examine for themselves. We shall submit with becoming resignation in the present case, because we feel that their want of frankness, perhaps we should say *honesty*, does not materially affect our cause. We have information on the subject upon which we may with safety rely, and although it would have been very gratifying to see these individuals acting the part of gentlemen and *christians*, avowing a readiness to furnish the asked for direction and a willingness to correct any error into which they had been led, yet we freely acquiesce in their perfect right to adopt and pursue what line of conduct they choose. We leave it to them to settle the matter with their own consciences whether they have done by us in this instance as they would have others do to them.

We shall now take the liberty of stating a fact communicated to us by a friend whose name may be seen by any gentlemen calling at our office. There is such a combination of circumstances that little doubt can remain as to the identity of the converted Universalist. And we feel a confidence stronger than *presumption*, in asserting that HE WAS NOT AT THE TIME OF HIS CONVERSION, NOR EVER HAD BEEN A UNIVERSALIST, which, it must be confessed, is a circumstance that somewhat affects the narrative of our Methodist brethren.

In conclusion, we assure the editors of the Advocate and Journal that names are at their disposal, and if we have been so fortunate as to gain the truth in the case, we ask them to atone for the wrong done Universalism by the narrative in question. We shall be happy, also, to correct any error into which we may have fallen, whenever they will do us the justice to give the information repeatedly demanded at their hands.

S.

The following article is from the pen of the editor of the New-York Evangelist. We present it merely to give a specimen of "strong language." We wonder not at the existence and spread of infidelity. Our only wonder is, that it is not more prevalent. Whether the spirit of God is really with them we shall not at present decide. When we see "the fruit of the spirit," which "is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," we shall acknowledge its presence. At this moment the Presbyterians are at war with the Methodists, and for want of sufficient business here, (a church *militant* indeed) they are quarrelling among themselves. "Appeals," "Reviews," "Circulars," and "Letters," are the order of the day. Notwithstanding all this, which looks more like the "works of the flesh, hatred, variance; emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings," we are told about a "*new* presence of God," as if the Deity came to spend winters in New-York, (Heaven pardon the expression) and carry on the work of revivals. We beg our readers to examine it attentively, and we are confident that, with us, their only wonder will be that infidelity is not far more prevalent. S.

"THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN NEW-YORK.

"It is with no ordinary feelings of solemnity and awe that we feel called upon to express our decided convictions on this subject. Such things are done here, and with such results, as never happen where God is not present by the special influences of his Spirit. The meeting in Rev. E. W. Baldwin's Church has been followed by the hopeful conversion of a considerable number and many are now anxious. Since that, a meeting has been held in Mr. Patton's church, prolonged through two weeks, and many have been impressed with their need of a savior. And though ill health has obliged the pastor to withdraw from the cares of his office for a season, yet we look to the goodness of the great shepherd to take care of his flock, and bless the means now using for the salvation of sinners. A protracted meeting commenced in Mr. Ludlow's church on Monday of this week, and in Dr. Spring's on Thursday. Several other congregations are in an interesting state.

"Whatever there is of responsibility or concern connected with the new presence of the Holy Spirit, it now rests here upon both saints and sinners. The former should pray, and live, and labor, as if God was near. They should be careful to do nothing, either by worldly engrossment, or lightness of carriage, calculated to hinder the work. They should afford every encouragement to their families to attend upon it. They should go about to save sinners with that confidence in God, and that expectation of success, which arises from a conviction that it is a set time to favor Zion. Sinners too should feel, that when others are converted around them it is pre-eminently an accepted time, and a day of salvation. It involves greater guilt, because it shows greater hardness, to remain impenitent at a time when others are embracing religion as the future occupation of their lives. And when God is showing himself gracious to multitudes around, the obligation and the encouragement are pre-eminent, to seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is nigh. Finally, how fearful the condition of any one, sinner or saint, who, through unbelief, lives through a revival with his soul unblessed, and sees the blessing without tasting the grace.

"The prayers of all who love revivals are entreated for this great city at such a time. The work, in its particulars, has been such, as gives great evidence of the power of God, and of what he is willing to do in reclaiming the vicious and the unbelieving, if his people will only *prove* him by their obedience, faith and prayer."

THE WILL, AGAIN.

Various are the speculations elicited by that particular clause in the Will of the late Stephen Girard, touching his donation for an orphan College. Scarcely a paper arrives without some comments, either in condemnation or approval. One circumstance in relation to it is peculiar. Most of the Journals, which have been supposed to be inclined to a union of civil and ecclesiastical concerns, or in other words, who have pursued a course which it has been supposed directly tended to such a state of things, have come out openly against Mr. Girard, or the conditions of his Will; and some in no very measured terms, as will be seen in another part of our paper of this week. Among the many of this class, we are sorry to find our friend Benedict of the Norwalk Gazette. We feel a species of fatherly affection for that publication, and although it has been a somewhat truant child, we should rejoice in seeing it consistent with self-evident principles. We will not question our friend's motives, but there is a *possibility* that he may misjudge as well as others. After giving the extract from the Will, which will be found on our 4th page, Mr. Benedict remarks:

"The editor of a Baptist paper at Philadelphia, says Mr. Girard was a contemner of Revelation, of which the foregoing is sufficient proof. 'He did not appear to make any account of eternity, but few men ever made more of time!' Mistaken man! Now eternity is every thing to him—time nothing; and the Bible has said, 'what if a man should gain the whole world.'"

Pray, friend Benedict, in what part of the extract (the reader will please turn to it) do you find the "sufficient proof" that Mr. G. "was a contemner of Revelation!" We really should think it would puzzle any rational man to find it there, or indeed any thing bearing the least resemblance to it. On the contrary, we see not how any man, orthodox or heterodox, saint or sinner, could have expressed himself, in less exceptionable language. One word in relation to his quotation of Scripture, and we have done. Will he at this late period of Biblical research and criticism, presume to quote the text he has done, at the close of his remarks, with the appli-

cation which he there evidently intends to make? If we were not well acquainted with him, we should be inclined to attribute to him dishonest motives. P.

A ministering brother writes us from Middletown, Conn. that the cause of Universalism is prospering in that section, notwithstanding every opposition, and the powerful exertions to build up opposite sentiments. He observes, "The Limitarians have now a fashionable *protracted meeting;* may the Lord give to their labors the final success that has generally attended such operations. These evtravagant and absurd contrivances will do more, in the end, for the spread of Universalism, than any other course our limitarian brethren could pursue. God takes the wise in their own craftiness. And there can be no doubt that the means now so extensively made use of to build up their cause on the groundless vagaries of an over-wrought enthusiasm, will ultimately bring utter ruin and discomfiture on the heads of those engaged therein. The interest in liberal religious views is rapidly increasing. On the evenings that I have preached here, the house of meeting has been crowded to overflowing. The last evening, great numbers were obliged to retire, not being able to get seats."

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

DIALOGUE. NO. 1.

P. Mr. U. I am sorry to hear that you are leaning towards Universalism, and that you have given up the doctrine of everlasting punishment, which the Bible so plainly teaches.

U. I would not have you think friend P., that in renouncing the doctrine you speak of, and which I fully believed when I joined your church, that I have also discarded my belief in the Bible. I fully believe it to be the truth of God, but from having compared texts with texts, and having seen the character of their Author pourtrayed therein as opposed to malevolence and cruelty, (which must be the accompaniments of endless misery,) I cannot believe such a dogma.

P. Well, I cannot see how you can believe Universalism, and the Bible which refutes it. If this doctrine should become prevalent, I have no doubt that the catalogue of crimes would be increased tenfold.

U. The Bible in my opinion does not disclose to us any doctrine, which is so much opposed to the divine benevolence and mercy, so conspicuous in the works of creation and the dealings of God, as that of endless torment; and I find that the words, "everlasting," "forever," and "perpetual," were used by the writers of the Bible when speaking of the judgments and chastisements of the Lord, and these judgments were of a temporal nature only. As to your fears that the world would become desperately wicked if Universalism should prevail, they are groundless. You know, Sir, that several members of your church have been expelled for open misdemeanors, and immoral practices, not because they had become Universalists.

P. This punishment of yours, which you say takes place in this life, subsequently to the commission of crime, has no tendency to restrain men from vice, for the transient goadings of conscience they may occasionly feel, are easily stifled, and they have nothing to fear hereafter.

U. I admit that all sin will meet its due reward, "the wicked shall not go unpunished," but your creed teaches that the vilest sinner can almost instantly be forgiven, and escape *all* punishment, while you yourself allow that the consequent penalty of impenitence is insufficient to keep some men from vice.

P. Your system teaches that the drunkard receives his *just* reward in the reflection that his reputation is lost, his friends forfeited, and his wife and children beggared; so with the blasphemer, and other sinners, yet how many die, having filled up the measure of their wickedness in these, and other vices, without manifesting any apparent symptoms of what you call punishment.

U. My dear Sir, what keeps you from committing the crimes you have named? a fear that God will punish you in hell, or a conviction that your good fame must be abandoned, your happiness destroyed, and your enjoyments turned into sadness, and loathing of yourself and your follies? While we see those who firmly believe in eternal torment, entering upon a career of licentiousness, and that too in the face of their "covenant vows" to lead a holy life, and their connexion with "God's visible church," I am inclined to think that there are other motives to excite us to righteousness. My Bible teaches me that "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"—and that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, [not to be wicked,] but "to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world"—nor can I find on its sacred pages, the threatnings of an "eternal hell" as the punishment of sin, or the inducement to practice virtue. Paul, in giving his hearers to understand that the grace of God was all-sufficient to save, cautioned them against sinning, that grace might abound, but no where intimates that they must become penitent and pious, or they would be consigned to everlasting agony by an angry God.

P. But friend U. you forget that Paul also says, "we are not of those who draw back to perdition," that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," and that the wicked shall "be punished with everlasting destruction."

U. As I find that this "everlasting destruction," has an allusion to the downfall of the city of Jerusalem, and that the same word is used by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, to denote limited duration, I cannot conceive that Paul meant any more than they did. See Isaiah lxvi, 24, "for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched," yet we are assured he was speaking of carcasses slain in battle. Again, if Paul really believed and preached the doctrine of endless misery as our modern preachers do, it is very singular to me that he did not say, (as is often said in our day,) when giving a narration of his conversion to king Agrippa, (See Acts, xxvi.) that *he was saved from an eternal hell.* And there are very few orthodox christians among us, who would forbear menacing their persecutors with this punishment, were they called like Paul to endure bonds, stripes, and a prison for their religion; yet he threatened his accusers and enemies with no such wo, for this plain reason, he *knew* of no such doom.

Q. R.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

MESSRS EDITORS—In looking over the last number of the Messenger, I observed a notice of another laborer in the cause of Universal Benevolence. Such intelligence must convey a pleasing sensation to the mind of every well wisher to the cause of truth; more especially so, when we take into consideration the small number of our laborers in comparison to the great mass of limitarian preachers which every where surround us, using every possible means to put down, and doom to utter extinction, every thing that will not correspond with their limited views of christianity. If we take a view of the present excited state of society, it will be discovered that instead of their labors exerting a salutary influence, evils of an alarming magnitude every where present themselves. Discord and confusion are the order of the day. Social and domestic harmony have been sacrificed; the sacred ties of conjugal affection have been rent asunder; fathers and mothers have imbued their hands in the blood of their innocent offspring; reason and judgment have been alienated. The numbers that have fallen victims to suicide in consequence of, and during the present excitement, are without a parallel.

Such we conceive to be the legitimate effects of limitarian preaching, and in view of them, it is truly pleasing to find that some of our young men have independence enough to buckle on the armor, and walk forth prepared to wield the sword of truth, in opposition to such fatal error. I am the more gratified with this accession, from having some months since enjoyed the pleasure of a personal interview with Mr. Hillyer, and I sincerely congratulate him and our friends generally, on the bold and determined stand he has taken, confidently believing that the cause of truth will find in him a worthy and able advocate. E. W.

Buckram, L. I. Jan. 22, 1832.

ORDINATION.

Rev. O. Whiston, late of this city, was ordained to the pastoral office, over the Universalist Society in Cs vego, N. Y. on Wednesday, 28th ult. Sermon by Rev. P. Morse, Watertown, Introductory Prayer, and Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. A. B. Grosh, of Utica, and ordaining prayer by Rev. S. R. Smith, of Clinton. Though the travelling was very bad, from the great depth of snow, a large congregation assembled.

MARRIED,

In this city, by the Rev. T. J. Sawyer, Mr. Willet Webt, and Miss Hannah B. Gage.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A "SHORT SERMON," is received, and will appear in our next. The attention to G. R.'s request, promised in this number, is postponed till our next, for want of room.

NOTICE.

The Ladies' Dorcas Society will meet at Mrs. Durell's No 27 Roosevelt-st. on Wednesday next, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

RELIGIOUS NOTICES.

Br. S. J. Hillyer will preach at Newark N. J. Sunday afternoon, 29th inst. and at Camptown in the evening.

AGENTS.

The following gentlemen will act as Agents for the MESSENGER, to whom applications may be made. Frederick A. Smith, Stamford, Ct. G. Lounsbury, Long Ridge, Ct.; N. S. Bailey, Norwalk, Ct.; Alva Gray, and J. D. Taylor, Saugatuck, Ct.; A. A. M'Neil, Bridgeport, Ct; F. P. Ambler, Trumbull, Ct.; Herman Fairchild, Newtown, Ct.; A. Price, Bethel Ct., Hezekiah Scott, Ridgefild, Ct.; Thomas Purdy, Rye N. Y.; J. M'Coy, Peekskill, N. Y; S. L. Hayes, Cairo, N. Y.; Rev. T. J. Whitcomb, Hudson N. Y.; M. W. Riggs, Avon, N. Y. Z. B. Oakley, P. M. Huntington, L. I.; Post Master, Buckram, L. I.: Rev. Wm. Hutchinson, Hempstead, L. I.; A. G. Case, Southold, L. I. Aaron Baldwin, Newark, N. J.; Samuel C. Johnes, Hightstown, N. J.; Joseph M. Brown, Augusta, N. J.; Post Master, New-Brunswick, N. J.; Rev'ds A. C. Thomas and Zelotes Fuller, Philadelphia; John K. Wright, Easton, Pa.; Wm. George, Pottstown, Pa.

THE THREE HOMES.

"Where is thy home?" I asked a child,
Who, in the morning air,
Was twining flowers most sweet and wild
In garlands for her hair.

"My home," the happy heart replied,
And smiled in childish glee,
"Is on the sunny mountain side
Where soft winds wander free."

O! blessings fall on artless youth,
And all its rosy hours,
When every word is joy and truth,
And treasures live in flowers!

"Where is thy home?" I asked of one
Who bent with flushing face,
To hear a warrior's tender tone
In the wild wood's secret place;

She spoke not but her varying cheek,
The tale might well impart;
The home of her young spirit meek
Was in a kindred heart.

Ah! souls that well might soar above,
To earth will fondly cling,
And build their hopes on human love,
That light and fragile thing!

"Where is thy home, thou lonely man?"
I asked a pilgrim grey,
Who came, with furrowed brow, and wan,
Slow musing on his way.

He paused, and with a solemn mien
Upturned his holy eyes,
"The land I seek thou ne'er hast seen,
My home is in the skies!"

O! blest—thrice blest! the heart must be
To whom such thoughts are given,
That walks from worldly fetters free;—
Its only home in heaven!

STANZAS.

Oh! ask me not to sing to night,
Dejection chills my feeble powers,
I own that halls of glittering light
Are festive as in former hours.
But when I last amid them moved,
I sung for friends beloved and dear,
Their smiles inspired, their lips approved,
Now all is changed—they are not here.

I gaze around—I view a throng,
The radiant slaves of pride and art,
Oh! can *they* prize my simple song,
The soft low breathings of the heart?
Take back the lute, its tuneful string
Is moisten'd by a sorrowing tear,
To-night, I may not, cannot sing,
The friends that love me are not here!

SOCIAL WORSHIP,

Agreeable to the best impulses of our nature.

By Mrs. Barbauld.

Sentiments of admiration, love, and joy, swell the bosom with emotions which seek for fellowship and communication. The flame indeed may be kindled by silent musing; but when kindled it must infallibly spread. The devout heart, penetrated with large and affecting views of the immensity of the works of God, the harmony of his laws, and the extent of his beneficence, bursts into loud and vocal expressions of praise and adoration; and from a full and overflowing sensibility, seeks to expand itself to the utmost limits of creation. The mind is forcibly carried out of itself, and, embracing the whole circle of animated existence, calls on all above, around, below, to help to bear the burden of its gratitude. Joy is too brilliant a thing to be confined within our own bosoms; it burnishes all nature, and with its vivid coloring gives a kind of factitious life to objects without sense or motion. There cannot be a more striking proof of the social tendency of these feelings, than the strong propensity we have to *suppose* auditors when there are none. When men are wanting, we address the animal creation; and rather than have none to partake of our feelings, we find sentiment in the music of birds, the hum of insects, and the low of kine, nay, we call on rocks and streams and forests to witness and share our emotions. Hence the royal shepherd, sojourning in caves and solitary wastes, calls on the hills to rejoice, and the floods to clap their hands; and the lonely poet, wandering in the deep recesses of uncultivated nature, finds a temple in every solemn grove, and swells his chorus of praise with the winds that bow the lofty cedars. And can he, who, not satisfied with the wide range of animated existence, calls for the sympathy of the inanimate creation, refuse to worship with his fellow men? Can he who bids "Nature attend," forget to "join every *living* soul" in the universal hymn? Shall we suppose companions in the stillness of deserts, and shall we overlook them amongst friends and townsmen? It cannot be! Social worship for the devout heart, is not more a duty than it is a real want.

MUSIC OF NATURE.

"There is no sound of simple nature that is not music. It is all God's work, and so harmony. You may mingle and divide and strengthen the passages of its great anthem, and it is still melody—melody. The low winds of summer blow over the waterfalls and the brooks, and bring their voices to your ear, as if their sweetness was linked by an accurate finger; yet the wind is but a fitful player; and you may go out when the tempest is up, and hear the strong trees moaning as they lean before it, and the long grass hissing as it sweeps through, and its own solemn monotony over all—and the dimple of that same brook and the waterfall's unaltered bass, shall still reach you in the intervals of its power, as much in harmony as before, and as much a part of its perfect and perpetual hymn. There is no accident of nature's causing, which can bring in discord. The loosened rock may fall into the abyss, and the overblown tree rush down through the branches of the wood, and the thunder peal awfully in the sky;—and sudden and violent as these changes seem, their tumult goes up with the sound of winds and waters, and the exquisite ear of the musician, can detect no jar."

"Nature seems never so utterly still to me as in the depth of a summer afternoon. The heat has driven in the birds, and the leaves hang motionless in the trees, and no creature has the heart, in that faint sultriness to utter a sound. The snake sleeps on the rock, and the frog lies breathing in the pool, and even the murmur that is heard at night is inaudible, for the herbage droops beneath the sun, and the seed has no strength to burst its covering. The world is still, and the pulses beat languidly."

"But if you would hear one of nature's most various and delicate harmonies, lie down in the edge of the wood when the evening breeze begins to stir, and listen to its coming. It touches first the silver foilage of the birch, and the slightly hung leaves, at its merest breath, will lift and rustle like a thousand tiny wings, and then it creeps up to the tall fir, and the fine tassels send out a sound like a low whisper, and, as the oak feels its influence, the thick leaves stir heavily, and a deep tone comes sullenly out like the echo of a far off bassoon.—They are all wind-harps of different power, and as the breeze strengthens and sweeps equally over them all, their united harmony has a wonderful grandeur and beauty."

"Were you ever out fishing upon a lake in a smart shower? It is like the playing of musical glasses. The drops ring out with a clear bell-like tinkle, following each other sometimes so closely that it resembles the winding of a distant horn; and then, in the momentary intervals, the bursting of the thousand tiny bubbles comes stealthily on your ear, more like the recollection of a sound than a distinct murmur."

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

If a happy marriage has given and ensures to man peace at home, let their be no dread of the caprices of chance; his happiness is sheltered from the strokes of fortune. A wife, gentle and affectionate, sensible and virtuous, will fill his whole heart, and leave no room for sadness. What will he care for the loss of property when he possesses this treasure? Is not his house sufficiently magnificent as long as she commands respect to it—splendid enough, as long as her presence adorns it? A cottage where virtue dwells is far superior to a palace—it becomes a temple.

Through her exertions order reigns in his household, as well as peace to the soul. If injustice or ingratitude irritate or grieve him, her caresses will appease, and her smiles console him.

Labor, pains, pleasures, opinions, sentiment and thoughts, are in common between them; and as he never expresses more or less, than what she feels, he reads at a glance her thoughts in her gestures; and even in her eyes, he can apply to her what used to be said of Pompey when young: "The thought was uttered before the voice had sounded."

If he be ill, the double balm of love and friendship comes to his aid, numberless delicate and affectionate attentions dispel uneasiness, and waken hope. Pain itself smiles upon tenderness and again knows pleasure.

How easy and short does the voyage of life appear with such a companion! As to the fortunate isles, he always finds in the same time buds, flowers and fruits! His summer has retained and preserved the charms of his spring; and old age has drawn near without his perceiving its approach.

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